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Blaenavon Urban District Council.

## MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

FOR THE YEAR 1925.



CROSSFIELD HOUSE,  
BLAENAVON, MON.,  
*April, 1926.*

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present to you my Second Annual Report respecting the health and sanitary condition of the Urban District of Blaenavon during the year ended December 31st, 1925. In accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Health, the Report for this year is in the nature of a Survey Report.

### General Description.

The Blaenavon Urban District is situated at the upper end of the valley of the Avon Llwyd in the north western part of the County of Monmouth, it is surrounded on the north by Brynmawr, on the south by Abersychan, on the east by Abergavenny, and on the west by Nantyglo, Blaina and Abertillery. The area of the district is 4,612 acres, and the population at the last census 14,469 (6,594 males and 5,875 females).

The full rateable value is £42,289, assessable value £36,265. The rates for the year ended March, 1926, were as follows:—

General District Rate	5/2	in the £,	present half year	3/-
Poor and County Rate	8/-	"	"	4/10
Water Rent Charge	1/6	"	"	9
	<u>14/8</u>			<u>8/7</u>

According to your last balance sheet, the outstanding loans under the Public Health Acts amounted to £49,000 and £172,000 under the Housing Acts. The district depends mainly on coal mining which is controlled by the Blaenavon Company, Ltd. The Company also own iron and steel works which, owing to depression of trade and other circumstances, have not been working to their full extent. It ought to be mentioned that this long-continued trade depression is frequently urged in reply to criticism of the inaction of the Council as a sanitary authority.

Geologically the district lies mainly on the coal measures, but in the Bloreng district, the millstone grit outcrops in the escarpment on the height of the mountain.

### **General Statistics.**

Area (acres) 4,612.

Population (1925) 13,080.

Amount of Poor Law Relief; the extent to which hospital and other forms of gratuitous medical relief are utilised. *£5121*

Number of Inhabited Houses (1921) 2,466; (1925) 2,604.

Number of Families or separate occupiers (1921) 2,779.

Rateable Value, £42,289.

Sum represented by a penny rate, £165.

Rooms occupied (1921) 11,815.

### **Extracts from Vital Statistics of the Year.**

Births, 270—Legitimate, M. 132; F. 135.  
Illegitimate, M. 3; F. 0.

Birth Rate per 1,000 population, 20.64.

Deaths, 161 (85 M. and 76 F.).

Death Rate per 1,000 population, 12.55.

Number of Women dying in or in consequence of Child-birth:—From Sepsis, none; from other causes, 1.

Deaths of infants under one year of age, 27—  
Legitimate, M. 11; F. 14.  
Illegitimate, M. 2; F. 0.

Deaths of Infants under one year per 1,000 births:—  
Legitimate, 93.25; Illegitimate, 666.66.

Deaths from Measles, none.

Deaths from Whooping Cough, 1.

Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years), 1.

### **Nursing Arrangements, Hospitals and other Institutions available for the District.**

There are no nursing arrangements available for the district, and no hospitals for the treatment and isolation of infectious diseases, etc., which is a matter of great regret, as, owing to the prevalence of overcrowding, it is almost impossible to isolate infectious cases in the homes of the people where all cases of illness have of necessity to be nursed.

**CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.**—Among the Clinics carried on in this district is the Maternity and Child Welfare Centre, provided by the County Council; one session of two hours is held weekly. Children from the time of birth up to five years of age are regularly visited in their homes by the Lady Health Visitor, the mothers are given advice with regard to their own health and that of their babies, and, in cases of necessity, free foods and clothing are provided from funds collected locally and provided by the County Council.

School Clinics and Dental Clinics are also carried on by the Medical Officers and Dentists provided by the County Council.

Tuberculosis cases are referred for treatment to the Medical Officers of the King Edward VII. Memorial Association.

Venereal Diseases are treated at the Clinic in the Royal Gwent Hospital in Newport.

There is no steam disinfecter in the district for the disinfection of infected bedding, clothing, etc. Infected rooms are fumigated with formalin vapour. Disinfectants are also supplied.

### **Laboratory Work.**

All pathological and bacteriological examinations, etc., are made by the County Pathologist, Dr. Catto, at the County Council Laboratory, Newport. The Council provides Diphtheria Antitoxin to all medical practitioners when requested by them.

### **Public Health Staff.**

The Public Health Staff consists of a whole-time Sanitary Inspector and a part-time Medical Officer of Health.

### **Adoptive Acts, Byelaws and Regulations.**

The Infectious Diseases Prevention Act, 1890, and Parts 3 and 4 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890, were adopted on 30th January, 1891, and came into force on 1st. April, 1891. The Private Street Works Act, 1892, was adopted on 27th October, 1910, and came into force on 2nd January, 1911. Byelaws and regulations have been adopted with regard to:—

1. Dairies, Cowsheds and Milk Shops.
2. Cleansing of Footways, Pavements, etc.
3. Means of Escape in Factories, etc.
4. Slaughter Houses.
5. Common Lodging Houses.
6. Tents, Vans, Sheds, etc.

7. Nuisances.
8. Offensive Trades.
9. New Streets and Buildings, the alteration of buildings and drainage of existing buildings (revised 9th May, 1925).
10. Cemeteries.

The Public Health Act, 1925, has not yet been adopted in this district.

### Water Supply.

The Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Reservoirs and Filter Beds at No. 2 were acquired by the Council from the Gas and Water Co. in 1899 for £10,250. The Forge Side Reservoir and Bunkers Tank were constructed by the Council in 1895. Since that date, many improvements have been carried out. The No. 2 Reservoir has been re-lined, a new Service Reservoir has been constructed near the No. 2 Reservoir, a Filter Bed has been provided at Forge Side, Edmunds' Tank has been constructed and a large number of additional sources of supply have been conveyed to the reservoirs by the present Surveyor. It is greatly regretted that, owing to circumstances over which the Council have not had any control, the No. 4 Reservoir (the construction of which was commenced in 1914) has not yet been completed.

Samples of the water supplied in the various portions of the district have been taken and forwarded to Mr. G. R. Thompson, the County Analyst, for analysis, and the reports have, in every case, been satisfactory:

The capacities of the reservoirs are as follows:—

No. 1	...	...	600,000	gals.	1,227	ft.	above sea level.
No. 2	...	...	1,012,790	"	1,243	"	"
No. 3	...	...	2,500,000	"	1,315	"	"
Forge Side	...	...	1,500,000	"	1,279	"	"
Bunkers	...	...	60,000	"	1,441	"	"
Service Reservoir...			508,670	"	1,315	"	"
No. 4 (not yet completed)	...	...	3,637,500	"	1,315	"	"

As I pointed out in my monthly report, the Council should take steps to provide the inhabitants of certain farms in the Garnyrerw area with an adequate supply of pure water, and that a filter bed should be provided at the Bunkers and a larger filter bed near Edmunds' Spring.



### Sewage Disposal.

There is no proper system of sewage disposal. The sewage is discharged untreated into streams and watercourses which, contribute to the Avon Llwyd. Attempts have been made to abolish the primitive methods of sewage disposal in the various urban districts abutting the Avon Llwyd, but it is not yet a *fait accompli*. Blaenavon is one of the constituent authorities of the Eastern Valleys Sewerage Board in accordance with the terms of the Provisional Order of December 13th, 1912. I congratulate you upon the provision of the main sewer from the Forge Side District, which will obviate the use of the brook as an open sewer.

### Water Closets.

Since the year 1911, 280 additional closets have been provided by various owners in respect of houses where formerly one closet served the need of two or more. Instead of dealing with the question of closet accommodation at each Meeting of the Council, it would be preferable if the area were divided into, say, 10 divisions or zones and the defaulters in each division dealt with separately, this method may at first appear to be slow, but eventually more effective results would be obtained.

### Watering of Streets.

I have repeatedly called your attention to the complaints received from tradesmen of the nuisance caused by dust being blown about in the main streets. It is impossible to carry out the Public Health Meat Regulations which came into force on April 1st, 1925, and I most emphatically recommend that a watering cart should be purchased **and made full use of.**

### Street Scavenging.

I would again urge upon you the necessity of cleansing the streets and street gullies more frequently, and that the deposits taken from such gullies should be immediately collected by the scavenging cart, and not allowed to be scattered about by the four winds of heaven. The streets on a Sunday morning present a woe be-tide appearance as a result of the papers and rubbish which are strewn about the roads by pedestrians on a Saturday night. The Surveyor is unable to remedy this state of affairs as you have prohibited the employment of any labour on a Sunday morning. Waste paper receptacles should be provided in Broad Street.

## Sanitary Administration, 1925.

During the year, the following notices were served by your Sanitary Inspector, Mr. R. S. Widdowson, and have been complied with:—

Stone-ware Gullies in lieu of Iron Traps	...	4
House Drains cleaned and repaired	...	13
Dwelling Houses erected	...	4
Dwelling Houses supplied with water	...	4
Troughing and Down-pipes repaired	...	4
Additional Closets erected	...	6
Closets cleaned and repaired	...	18
Offensive Matter and Manure	...	7
Dampness in Dwelling Houses	...	4

Property owners to provide a separate closet for each dwelling in lieu of one closet serving the need of two or more dwelling houses—157.

Dwelling Houses inspected during the year under Section 17 of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1909—124.

Workshops registered under the Factory Act, 1901:—

Stone Masons...	...	1	Tailoring	...	...	2
Wheelwrights	...	2	Millinery	...	...	6
Ironworkers and Smiths	...	2	Dressmaking	...	...	2
Plumbers	...	4	Sausage Factories	...	...	7
Bakeries	...	7	Painters & Paperhangers	...	...	2
Boot and Shoe Manuf'rs.	...	10	Knitting Factory	...	...	1
Joinery	...	8	Harness Maker	...	...	1

The following Damaged Goods have been condemned and destroyed as unfit for human consumption:—

Pineapple Chunks	...	6 tins.	Apricots	...	...	1 tins.
Condensed Milk	...	4 "	Sardines	...	...	2 "
Salmon	...	4 "	Herrings	...	...	10 "
Corned Beef	...	4 "	Crab	...	...	1 "
Peaches	...	3 "	Tomatoes	...	...	22 "
Pickles	...	1 "				

### Llanover Road Cemetery.

Two recent graves are within three feet of the Llanover Road boundary wall and within eight feet of your water main. The subsoil water from this graveyard flows towards Llanover Road and, should any defect occur in the water main in this vicinity, polluted subsoil water would be aspirated into the main; more especially as the water supply during the summer months will probably be intermittent. I, therefore,

re-affirm the recommendation contained in my monthly report that it is advisable to make application to the Home Office for an Order in Council prohibiting any further burials taking place in this graveyard.

SCHOOLS.—The sanitary condition of the schools is satisfactory.

### **Housing.**

From the year 1910 to 1925 inclusive, 383 houses have been erected, including 199 houses erected by the Council, it cannot therefore be said that private enterprise has met the demand, neither can it be alleged that the housing conditions of the district generally have improved to any appreciable extent since Dr. Morgan Rees reported upon the sanitary condition of the district in 1911. In the Report dated June 6th, 1924, the attention of the Council was drawn to the fact that 104 houses—as per the details therein given—should be closed as unfit for human habitation and, furthermore, that eight houses should be converted into four through houses.

A further housing scheme should be put into operation to relieve the present overcrowding, and to enable you to deal with the houses which are insanitary. I also consider that the Council should exercise the greatest possible care in selecting tenants for their Elgam Houses, so that these houses may continue to be what they were intended to be, namely, ideal homes for inhabitants of the district.

I also recommend that a Town Planning Scheme should be proceeded with so as to prevent the erection of hideous bungalows of varying types of construction which are certainly a blot on the landscape and are not in keeping with the 20th Century idea of housing and town planning.

Number of new houses erected during the year:—

(a) Total—4.

(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts, 1919 and 1923:—

(1) By the Local Authority ... None.

(2) By other bodies or persons ... None.

### **Unfit Dwelling Houses.**

INSPECTION.—(1) The total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under the Public Health or Housing Act)—562.

(2) Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of Districts) Regulations, 1910—124.

(3) Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation—4.

(4) Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation—92.

### **Remedy of Defects without Service of Formal Notices.**

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers—None.

### **Action under Statutory Powers.**

(A) Proceedings under Section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Acts, 1919:—

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs—92.

(2) Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit:—

(a) By Owners—None.

(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners—None.

(3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by Owners of intention to close—None.

(B) Proceedings under Public Health Acts:—

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied—44.

208 notices were served upon property owners at the Forge Side District to connect their drainage to Council's new main sewer, and all notices have been complied with.

(2) Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied:—

(a) By Owners—37.

(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners—None.



(C) Proceedings under Sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, 1909:—

- (1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders—4.
- (2) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made—None.
- (3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling houses having been rendered fit—None.
- (4) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made—None.
- (5) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders—None.

### **Milk Supply.**

There are 18 Cow-keepers and Purveyors of Milk and 15 Purveyors of Milk in the district; the average daily supply is 295 gallons; about 150 gallons are delivered daily by train; vendors living outside the district average 87 gallons daily.

### **Slaughter Houses, Cowsheds, Dairies, etc.**

The Milk Shops, Meat Shops, Registered Slaughter Houses, Dairies, Cowsheds and the Common Lodging Houses have all been frequently inspected during the year.

On account of the number of private slaughter houses it is impossible to inspect systematically the meat to be consumed by the public. The sites of the majority are unsuitable, and have not proper accommodation for animals prior to slaughtering, and some are structurally defective, therefore it would be advisable that the present slaughter houses should be closed, and a public abattoir provided. This is essential if the Public Meat Regulations, 1924, are to be carried out.

		In 1920.		In Jan., 1925.		In Dec., 1925.
Registered	...	6	...	10	...	10
Licensed	...	—	...	—	...	—

### **Infectious Diseases during the period 1921-25.**

#### **Notifiable Diseases during the year 1921.**

An epidemic of scarlet fever occurred during the months of September, October, November and December. Twenty-six cases were notified; several cases were notified from the same house; the majority were of a mild type, but two deaths

were caused by this disease. Two cases of diphtheria and one case of pneumonia were notified during this year. Only one case of pneumonia was notified though four deaths were registered.

**TUBERCULAR DISEASES.**—Five cases of pulmonary tuberculosis and 5 cases of other forms of tuberculosis were notified during 1921. Pulmonary Tuberculosis caused 2 deaths and other forms 3 deaths.

**Notifiable Diseases during the year 1922.**

Thirty-one cases of infectious Diseases were notified—15 scarlet fever, 5 diphtheria, 8 pneumonia and 3 ophthalmia neonatorum. These were all of a mild type, one case (of pneumonia) ended fatally. Influenza was widely prevalent during the spring months, causing 5 deaths.

**TUBERCULAR DISEASES.**—Seven cases of pulmonary tuberculosis and 3 cases of other forms of tuberculosis were notified. Pulmonary tuberculosis caused 4 deaths and other tuberculous diseases 3 deaths.

**Notifiable Diseases during the year 1923.**

Diphtheria ... 5 cases notified—I death occurred.  
 Scarlet Fever ... 8 „ No deaths.  
 Pneumonia ... 2 „ I death, aged 80 years.  
 Chicken-pox ... 3 „ No deaths.  
 Ophthalmia Neonatorum—I case notified.

**Tuberculosis.**

			New Cases		Deaths			
			Pul-monary		Non-Pul-monary		Pul-monary	
			M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
5	...	...						I
10	...	...	I			I		I
15	...	...		I			I	
20	...	...	I					
25	...	...	3		I		I	
45	...	...		2			I	
55	...	...		I				I
			5	3	I	I	2	2
			Total—10				Total—8	

CAUSES OF SICKNESS.—During the spring and early summer months, from March to July, a widespread epidemic of whooping cough occurred and was responsible for 6 deaths among young children. From September to December, measles were also very prevalent, and consequently the Forge Side Infants' School was closed for a period of three weeks; this disease caused two deaths among young children.

**Notifiable Diseases during the year 1924.**

Diphtheria: 10 cases notified—3 deaths;  
                   1 death 3 years, 1 death 4 years, 1 death 7 years.  
 Scarlet Fever: 2 cases—No deaths.  
 Pneumonia: 14 cases—3 deaths.  
                   1 death 37 years, 1 death 64 years, 1 death — years.  
 Chicken-pox: 102 cases—No deaths.  
 Erysipelas: 1 case—No death.  
 Encephalitis Lethargica: 2 cases—I death, 20 years.  
 Ophthalmia Neonatorum: 2 cases.

**TUBERCULOSIS—Notifications and Deaths.**

			New Cases		Deaths			
			Pul- monary M. F.	Non-Pul- monary M. F.	Pul- monary M. F.	Non-Pul- monary M. F.		
5	...	...			3	3	I	
15	...	...	I					
20	...	...	2	—				
25	...	...	4	I				
45	...	...	I					
			8	I	3	3	I	
			Total—9		Total—7			

CAUSES OF SICKNESS.—From January to July, a widespread epidemic of chicken-pox occurred, but was not responsible for any deaths.

### Notifiable Diseases during the year 1925.

Diphtheria: 3 cases notified—No deaths.

Scarlet Fever: 7 cases—No deaths.

Pneumonia: 14 cases—3 deaths;

1 death  $1\frac{3}{4}$  years, 1 death 3 years, 1 death 73 years.

Chicken-pox: 6 cases—No deaths.

Encephalitis Lethargic: 1 case—1 death.

Enteric Fever: 1 case—No death.

### TUBERCULOSIS—Notifications and Deaths.

			New Cases				Deaths			
			Pul- monary		Non-Pul- monary		Pul- monary		Non-Pul- monary	
			M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
I	...	...	I		I					
5	...	...	I		2	I				
10	...	...			2					
15	...	...	2					I		
20	...	...	I							—
25	...	...	3					I		
35	...	...	I	2		I				
45	...	...	I							
55	...	...	I					I		
			3	10	5	2	I	2	—	
			Total—20				Total—3			

OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM CASES.—Notified 1, treated at home 1, in hospital none, vision unimpaired 1, vision impaired none.

During the summer, a widespread epidemic of measles occurred throughout the district, but was not responsible for any deaths.

SMALL-POX.—No vaccinations were performed by me during the year under the Small-pox Prevention Regulations, 1917, but, as Public Vaccinator, I wish to draw your attention to the fact that only about 16 per cent. of all children born in the district are being vaccinated; there is a large unvaccinated population growing up in this district, and if small-pox were to break out, I fear the result would be disastrous.



## General Comments.

**BIRTH RATE.**—The number of births registered in the district was 270, equal to a birth rate of 20.6 per 1,000 of the estimated population. In the preceding year, the rate was 21.57.

The rate for England and Wales is 18.3.

The rate for the County is 21.5.

**DEATH RATE.**—161 deaths were registered during the year, giving a death rate of 12.55 per 1,000 of the estimated population (standardising factor 1.021). This is lower than the preceding year, when the rate was 16.08. The rate for England and Wales is 12.2; and 10.6 for the County.

**INFANTILE MORTALITY.**—Twenty-seven infants under one year died during the year, giving an infantile mortality rate of 100 per 1,000 births. This is considerably lower than the preceding year, 127.2. The rate for England and Wales is 75 and for the County 83.8.

Of the 27 deaths, 4 occurred during the first week after birth; 6 during the second week; 2 during the third week; and 2 during the fourth week; making a total of 14 under one month (51.7%). There were 6 deaths between the first and third months; 4 between the third and sixth months; and 3 between the sixth and eighth months.

The causes were: convulsions, 17; bronchitis, 4; congenital debility, 3; whooping cough, 1; otitis media and meningitis, 1; intussusception, 1.

## Conclusion.

Without dealing with matters relating to public health in greater detail, I am of opinion that the Council has not taken any active steps to carry out the recommendations contained in my first Annual Report. I therefore reiterate the same with even greater emphasis—particularly numbers 4 and 6—as I consider that it is the primary duty of an Urban Sanitary Authority to set an example in providing an ideal condition of affairs in matters appertaining to the public health of the community.

- (1) The provision of more Dwelling Houses.
- (2) The provision of a Public Slaughter House.
- (3) The provision of a Public Mortuary.

- (4) The provision of a Refuse Destructor and the daily collection of house refuse throughout the whole of your district.
- (5) The provision of an Infectious Diseases Hospital.
- (6) That all the Scavenging Carts should be provided with covers.
- (7) That Bread Vans should be covered in, and all bread delivered in paper wrappers.
- (8) A proper system of Sewage Disposal.

I append tables giving the causes of deaths in the district during the year.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

JOSEPH REYNOLDS,

M.B., B.CH., B.A.O.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE  
BLAENAVON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

## VITAL STATISTICS.

Year	Birth Rate		Death Rate		Infantile Mortality per 1,000	
	Blaenavon	England and Wales	Blaenavon	England and Wales	Blaenavon	England and Wales
1919	21.92	18.5	14.97	13.8	78.85	89
1920	25.58	25.4	16.21	12.4	104.61	80
1921	25.7	22.4	12.3	12.1	101.12	83
1922	22.2	20.6	13.43	12.9	118.88	77
1923	20.83	19.7	13.04	11.6	107.4	69
1924	21.57	18.8	16.08	12.2	127.2	75
1925	20.64	18.3	12.55	12.2	100	75
County of Monmouth.						
1925	21.5		10.6		83.8	

# Causes of Death in Blaenavon Urban District, 1925.

CAUSES OF DEATH				Males	F'males
<b>All Causes</b> ... ..				<b>85</b>	<b>76</b>
5.	Whooping Cough	...	...	1	—
7.	Influenza	...	...	1	—
8.	Encephalitis Lethargica	...	...	—	1
10.	Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	...	...	1	2
12.	Cancer, Malignant Disease	...	...	7	1
13.	Rheumatic Fever	...	...	1	1
15.	Cerebral Hæmorrhage, &c.	...	...	7	6
16.	Heart Disease	...	...	8	7
17.	Arterio-Sclerosis...	...	...	—	1
18.	Bronchitis	...	...	17	15
19.	Pneumonia (all forms)	...	...	1	2
20.	Other Respiratory Diseases	...	...	4	1
21.	Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum	...	...	1	—
22.	Diarrhœa, &c. (under 2 years)	...	...	—	1
25.	Acute and Chronic Nephritis	...	...	5	6
27.	Other Accidents and Diseases of Pregnancy and Parturition	...	...	—	1
28.	Congenital Debility and Malformation, Premature Birth	...	...	1	2
29.	Suicide	...	...	1	1
30.	Other Deaths from Violence	...	...	3	—
31.	Other Defined Diseases	...	...	26	28
Deaths of Infants under 1 year { Total ...				13	14
{ Illegitimate ...				2	—
<b>Total Births</b> ... ..				<b>135</b>	<b>135</b>
Legitimate ... ..				132	135
Illegitimate ... ..				3	—
<b>Population</b> ... ..				<b>13,080</b>	